
CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Dragnet Stops Over 33 Tons of Illegal Nevada Fireworks

Sacramento— Over 33 tons of illegal fireworks were confiscated in San Bernardino County over the past few weeks by a special statewide law enforcement task force. The enforcement effort blocked the transportation of illegal fireworks coming mostly from Pahrump, Nevada into California and resulted in more than 200 felony and misdemeanor citations between June 17 and July 4.

“The success of this enforcement effort shows that a huge amount of illegal fireworks have been kept off the streets of California,” said Ruben Grijalva, California State Fire Marshal and director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. “We have removed a significant threat to all Californians.”

Illegal fireworks -- such as firecrackers, roman candles, and mortar shells, the large aerial fireworks used at professional fireworks shows -- contribute to many of the fireworks-related fires and injuries that occur around the Fourth of July holiday. Anyone possessing fireworks that contain a total of more than 17 ounces of black powder will be charged with a felony. The majority of the illegal fireworks seized in Southern California were believed to have been purchased in Pahrump, Nevada.

In a related incident, a San Bernardino County jury on June 30 found Harold Leon Zick, 64, guilty of possessing fireworks without a valid permit. Zick was arrested in 2005 as part of a joint investigation by the California State Fire Marshal and the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department. Zick, who was caught with two different trailers for a combined total of 23 tons of illegal fireworks, will be sentenced July 28.

Agencies involved in this year’s interdiction effort included the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection/Office of State Fire Marshal, San Bernardino County Fire Department, the Inyo County Sheriff’s Department and the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District.

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